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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 7011  
INFO RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN 4131  
RUEHAD/UNNIT BAGHDAD 607  
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 6659  
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS 9213  
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 5723  
RUQMKW/AMEMBASSY KUWAIT 7341  
RUQMRA/AMEMBASSY JIDDA 0014  
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 9615  
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E.O. 12065: N/A  
TAGS: DEPR, PINS, SOPN, PLO, IZ, LE  
SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST REPORTER ARTICLE ON PLO  
- IRAQI RELATIONS AND FATAH CONGRESS

REFS: A) BEIRUT 2690, B) BEIRUT 2691

1. THE BEIRUT ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWS DIGEST, THE MIDDLE EAST REPORTER (MER), ON MAY 6 PUBLISHED STATEMENTS BY PLO LEADER YASIR ARAFAT THAT THE PLO'S RELATIONSHIP WITH IRAQ WAS "VERY GOOD" AND THAT IRAQ HAD BOUGHT TANKS FOR THE PALESTINIANS. MER ALSO SAID THAT FATAH, THE PLO'S LARGEST MEMBER ORGANIZATION WOULD HOLD A CONGRESS IN BEIRUT OR DAMASCUS WITHIN ONE WEEK. THE FOLLOWING IS THE FULL TEXT OF THE MER ARTICLE.

## 2. BEGIN TEXT:

A. BAGHDAD PAID FOR PLO TANKS, ARAFAT SAYS: PLO CHAIRMAN ARAFAT YESTERDAY SAID THE ORGANIZATION'S RELATIONSHIP WITH IRAQ WAS "VERY GOOD." SPEAKING TO SAUDI EDITORS IN RIYADH, HE DISCLOSED THAT THE IRAQI GOVERNMENT HAS PAID FOR THE PLO TANKS.  
B. HE DID NOT GIVE DETAILS, BUT THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THE PLO CHAIRMAN PUBLICLY ADMITTED THAT THE GUERRILLA MOVEMENT POSSESSED TANKS. WHEN THE ISRAELIS EARLIER IN THE YEAR SAID THAT FATAH CURRENTLY MAINTAINED TANKS IN SOUTHERN LEBANON, ARAFAT'S COMMENT WAS THAT THE FEW TANKS THE PLO KEPT THERE HAD BEEN SEIZED FROM THE ISRAELIS.  
C. MR. ARAFAT'S REMARKS ABOUT IRAQ WERE IN SHARP CONTRAST WITH THOSE MADE THE DAY BEFORE BY HIS SECOND IN COMMAND, SALAH (ABU IYAD) KHALAF. MR. KHALAF ACCUSED THE IRAQI REGIME OF CONTINUING TO SUPPORT "ABU NIDAL" WHOM ABU IYAD ACCUSED OF SEEKING TO ASSASSINATE FATAH LEADERS, (REFTEL A).  
D. ABU NIDAL, WHOSE REAL NAME IS SABRY AL BANNAL, HEADS A BREAKAWAY FACTION FROM FATAH WITH HEADQUARTERS IN BAGHDAD. ABU IYAD SAID THE IRAQI AUTHORITIES HAVE RENEGED ON A PROMISE THEY HAD GIVEN TO FATAH TO SUSPEND ABU NIDAL'S ACTIVITY. HE SAID THAT ABU NIDAL'S AGENTS PLANNED TO

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80 4329141

PAGE 002  
TOR: 101406Z MAY 80

NC 4329141

ASSASSINATE HIM DURING ABU IYAD'S VISIT TO BELGRADE LATE  
LAST MONTH.  
E. FATAH'S CONGRESS: ACCORDING TO AL LWA, FATAH WILL  
HOLD ITS PROJECTED CONGRESS IN BEIRUT OR DAMASCUS WITHIN  
ONE WEEK, AND THAT THREE MAIN TOPICS WILL HEAD THE AGENDA:  
1) PALESTINIAN NATIONAL UNITY AND WAYS AND MEANS FOR  
STRENGTHENING IT; 2) FATAH'S OWN ORGANIZATIONAL QUESTIONS;  
AND 3) RELATIONS WITH ARAB REGIMES AND THE GROUP'S  
ACTIVITY ABROAD.  
F. THE CONGRESS IS EXPECTED TO PRECEDE THE NEXT SESSION  
BY THE PLO'S PARLIAMENT IN EXILE, THE PALESTINE NATIONAL  
COUNCIL (PNC). NO DATE HAS BEEN FIXED YET FOR THE PNC  
MEETING, WHICH IS OVERDUE. THE LAST TIME THE 290-MEMBER  
PNC MET WAS IN DAMASCUS IN JANUARY, 1979. SHARP CONFLICTS  
OVER THE COMPOSITION OF THE PLO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE EMERGED  
AT THAT MEETING.

DECONTROL UPON RECEIPT.  
DEAN

END OF MESSAGE

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